

1240936

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is one of four operated under a contract with a large local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children who may have experienced trauma, placement and family breakdown.

The organisation's clinical psychologist provides a service to staff and children.

The manager has been registered since May 2018.

Inspection dates: 23 to 24 May 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
---	--

How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
---	---------------------------------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
---	---------------------------------

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 2 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/11/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/06/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (1)(a)(2)(a)(i)(vi))</p> <p>This particularly refers to having effective risk assessments and a manager's review in relation to children going missing from care.</p>	31/08/2018
<p>The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that each child's relevant plans are followed. (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b)(2)(c))</p> <p>This particularly refers to delivering stability and placement success to children and that information in their plans is accurate.</p>	31/08/2018
<p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4))</p>	31/08/2018
<p>The registered person must ensure that—</p>	31/08/2018

<p>within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes—</p> <p>the date, time and location of the use of the measure;</p> <p>a description of the measure and its duration;</p> <p>within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so (“the authorised person”)—</p> <p>has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and</p> <p>within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iii)(iv)(b)(i)(ii)(c))</p>	
<p>The registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating—</p> <p>the quality of care provided for children;</p> <p>the feedback and opinions of children about the children’s home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it; and any actions that the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children.</p> <p>The system referred to in paragraph (2) must provide for ascertaining and considering the opinions of children, their parents, placing authorities and staff. (Regulation 45 (2)(a)(b)(c)(5))</p>	31/10/2018

Recommendations

- Ensure that managers anticipate difficulties and review incidents, such as learning from disruptions and placement breakdowns. They are responsible for proactively implementing lessons learned and sustaining good practice. (‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 55, paragraph 10.24)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Currently placed children are making progress. They lead healthy lives and staff work creatively to discourage drug use. Children attend school and some children are making plans to start college in September. However, further improvement is needed to ensure that the manager is always aware of children's educational progress and attendance and any developing educational issues. Children have independence; this enables them to see their friends and participate in leisure activities in their home town. Children are currently making plans for their summer holiday.

However, this level of progress has not been achieved for other children who have lived at the home since the last inspection in November 2017. Three children's placements ended early before the aims of the placement were achieved. Some children's needs have been beyond the ability of staff to care safely for them. For example, some children have experienced mental health crises. New children who have been distressed have disturbed the stability of children already in residence. The organisation has said they will now only accept planned placements in future, fully supported by accurate information.

The organisation supports children and staff well through regular meetings and visits by the in-house psychologist. However, despite regular review by the manager, some children's in-house placement plans contain out-of-date information about their legal status or the progress of their therapeutic assessments, or lack detail about educational priorities.

Children's views and wishes are prioritised by staff in regular direct-work sessions. Children learn life skills, talk about their issues and challenges and make plans with staff for their futures. Respect for children's culture, ethnicity and religion is central to the way staff care for them.

Relationships between staff and the current children are positive because staff have time for them and feel confident looking after them. Staff are creative in their approach. For example, one member of staff uses personalised cartoons to help children find better paths in life. Staff go that extra mile by coming in on their days off to see children on their birthdays.

The atmosphere created by the manager and staff for children and the people important to them is welcoming, collaborative and not institutional.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The extent of children's challenges and their need for protection have not always been known to the staff prior to children's placements commencing. Some previous children have been at risk from drug taking, at risk from gangs or vulnerable through self-harm or to exploitation, and some children have made significant violent challenges towards staff. Staff have struggled but have managed to keep children safe until more suitable placements can be found.

If children go missing from the home, staff go out looking for them, as would a good parent, and give them a warm welcome on return. However, plans and risk assessments are not sufficiently individualised for each child and do not tell staff to make a report to the police immediately after the initial search or when they have lost sight of the child, as expected by the manager. The manager does not share information with local specialist police when there is a new child at risk of going missing from the home and has not picked up this delay in reporting or any inaccuracy in recording.

The manager's formal review of incidents when staff have restrained children has also not identified that staff have not properly recorded the duration and technique used, or that, in some cases, children and staff have not had a debriefing about the restraint. This means that the manager does not always know that each restraint is safe and that everyone has been supported afterwards.

Current children are engaged and cooperative with staff efforts to teach them about personal safety. Behaviour is currently well managed, and staff encourage children to think and put things right.

Rigorous recruitment checks mean that only safe adults get to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home is not yet delivering on its key purpose, described in the statement of purpose, to deliver stability to children. The level of admissions and discharges over the last 12 months has not delivered stability or placement success for the majority of children who have lived at the home since it opened in November 2016.

Some regulatory issues found at this inspection were also identified by Ofsted last year under the previous registered manager. For example, weaknesses in care planning and quality of managerial monitoring and review have recurred. Progress in these areas has not been sustained.

The manager had not identified any lessons learned from incidents or placement endings as recommended at the last inspection until the inspection took place. The manager delayed the opportunity to improve practice, which meant that better help for children was also delayed.

Children's views and wishes are clear in their records about their own care, and staff feel consulted and involved. However, the manager's review of the quality of care does not show how her informal consultation with them has influenced the development of the wider service. Children and staff are not included in how the service formally develops and improves.

Staff stability and experience have improved significantly as the team has grown and staff have become more confident. This meets a regulatory shortfall raised at the last inspection. Staff are well trained to meet children's current needs and form a diverse and caring team. The home will be fully staffed in the month following the inspection.

Although staff say that they get good support from their manager, they do not get the formal professional supervision they require in line with the organisation's policy. Long-standing agency staff have no formal supervision at all.

The organisation makes good challenges to the placing authority and other professionals, such as local police, when their support for children falls short. The home, with the current group of children, is at a significant point from which to demonstrate stability and continued improvement.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1240936

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Meadows Care Limited

Registered provider address: Meadows Care Limited, Egerton House, Wardle Road, Rochdale OL12 9EN

Responsible individual: Niel Shelmerdine

Registered manager: Samantha Goodrickmeech

Inspector

Christy Wannop, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018